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New York

President:	Mr. Wittig	(Germany)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Tian Lin
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	France	Mr. Briens
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Ninth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (S/2012/679)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: At the outset, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Gérard Araud, Permanent Representative of France, and his team for their services to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August 2012. I am sure that I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Araud, his Deputy Permanent Representative, Martin Briens, and his delegation for the great skill and leadership with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Ninth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (S/2012/679)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Sierra Leone to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jens Toyberg-Frandzen, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski, chairperson of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Canada, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/679, which contains the ninth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone.

I now give the floor to Mr. Toyberg-Frandzen.

Mr. Toyberg-Frandzen: I would like to thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to provide a briefing on the latest developments in Sierra Leone, pursuant to the ninth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) (S/2012/679), which has been submitted for the Council's consideration.

As detailed in the report, Sierra Leone continues to make steady progress in consolidating its achievements of the past decade. As Council members are aware, the joint Government and Peacebuilding Commission progress report on the Agenda for Change has been issued. It highlights the country's success in the implementation of the Government's priorities, in particular in the areas of infrastructure development, the provision of health services, and the energy and agriculture sectors. Planning for a successor development strategy, known as the Agenda for Prosperity, is under way. At the same time, the challenges of unemployment, especially among the youth, high living costs and related economic difficulties still persist, requiring a more long-term approach and sustained investment.

With regard to political developments, the main focus during the past six months has continued to be on the preparations for the 17 November presidential, parliamentary and local council elections. With technical assistance from the United Nations, major electoral arrangements, particularly the biometric voter registration exercise, were successfully concluded. Others, including the procurement of sensitive materials and communication links between regional tallying centres and the Commission's head offices in Freetown are ongoing. The nomination of candidates for the various elective positions will commence on 12 September, to be followed by a political campaign period from 17 October to 15 November.

Overall, preparations for the elections have proceeded satisfactorily, albeit with some challenges. In recognition of the complexity of conducting four elections — presidential, parliamentary, local council and mayoral — on the same date throughout the country, the National Electoral Commission has planned an extensive voter education programme using ward electoral and education committees that are comprised of local community representatives. The programme, which will also be supplemented by civil society organizations, is crucial to ensuring greater participation in the electoral process.

Since the completion of the report before the Council, on 6 September Parliament endorsed the revised nomination fees, which require presidential

candidates to pay 100 million leones, equivalent to $23,250; parliamentary candidates to pay 10 million leones, equivalent to $2,325; local council chairs to pay 5 million leones, equivalent to $1,167; and local council councilors to pay 2 million leones. The previous rates for the 2002 and 2007 elections were 1 million leones for presidential candidates and 100,000 leones for other elective positions.

Almost all political parties, as well as civil society groups and the National Human Rights Commission, strongly criticized the proposals for the substantial increase in nomination fees. Women's groups in particular have pointed out that the increased fees will prevent women from participating in the elections. Throughout that process, and given the importance of the concerns raised, I have encouraged all the political parties and the National Electoral Commission to engage in dialogue and to use the democratic processes to resolve their differences.

Although the official campaign date is now set to begin on 17 October, the country is already in an election mode, with political parties, in particular the two major parties — the All People's Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) — engaged in extensive tours of the country to mobilize support. All those political activities are so far proceeding in an orderly manner and without incident. We welcome that positive trend and at the same time believe that continued attention should be given to the following four areas: promoting constructive dialogue and mutual trust among the political actors, in particular the two major political parties, the APC and the SLPP; ensuring confidence in the security sector, especially in the Sierra Leone Police; improving communication and dialogue between the National Electoral Commission and the political parties; and managing the role of the media.

With regard to political dialogue, I am pleased to report that as a manifestation of national ownership of the political process, and in response to the Security Council's call made in its last presidential statement on Sierra Leone (S/PRST/2012/11), all 10 registered political parties and other major stakeholders have signed the Declaration of 18 May 2012, committing themselves to free, fair and peaceful elections. The Declaration outlines the roles and responsibilities of all the key players, including the political parties, the media, security agencies, civil society and relevant national institutions, such as the National Electoral Commission, in the upcoming elections. At present, UNIPSIL, in collaboration with the Political Parties Registration Commission and the National Commission for Democracy, is supporting the wider dissemination of the Declaration and monitoring its implementation. We continue to urge Sierra Leone's political parties and all major stakeholders to fully implement the commitments they have made under the Declaration.

Providing an enabling security environment at all stages of the electoral process and in the immediate post-election period will be equally indispensible. In that regard, the role of Sierra Leone's security agencies, in particular the Sierra Leone Police, remains critical. The training of the police and provision of the necessary logistics are well under way. However, recent incidents involving the use of force by the police in response to disturbances and other situations in various parts of the country have caused concern. We welcome the measures taken by the Government of Sierra Leone to investigate the circumstances that led to the use of lethal force, and stress the need to ensure respect for the rule of law and professional conduct by all during the electoral period and beyond. The establishment of the independent police complaints mechanism, as envisaged in the 2009 joint communiqué, would also contribute to that end.

Notwithstanding the authority vested in the National Electoral Commission by Sierra Leone's Constitution, the Commission and the political parties should continue to collaborate and address any concerns through open dialogue and in a constructive spirit. In that regard, efforts are under way, with the support of UNIPSIL, to strengthen the Political Parties Liaison Committee, comprised of representatives from all the political parties, the Commission, the Political Parties Registration Commission and other major actors, to serve as a fonun for consultations and dialogue in order to resolve any matters regarding the electoral process.

The Sierra Leone media has an important contribution to make in ensuring free, fair and peaceful elections by providing objective and balanced information to the population. In that regard, the Independent Media Commission should play a more active role in working with the media to discourage divisive and inflammatory reporting that could lead to political tension and violence. Others, in particular the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists and the Guild of Editors, should also educate and guide their memberships on their roles and responsibilities. As to

the Serra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), I am pleased to report the recent adoption of guidelines, which were signed by all political parties and the SLBC. The guidelines provide for equitable airtime and access for all political parties to SLBC programmes.

We are pleased to note that, during the past six months and since the adoption of the Declaration of 18 May 2012, there have been no incidents of political violence in the country. The political parties and other stakeholders continue to uphold their commitment to credible and peaceful elections. However, as the elections draw closer, the intensity of political competition, in particular between the two major political parties — the APC and the SLPP — is expected to increase and tensions are expected to rise. However, with the prevailing spirit of dialogue and constructive engagement among Sierra Leone's political actors, we are confident that such tensions will be managed and violence prevented. In that regard, we are encouraged by the level of commitment and active engagement of all segments of Sierra Leone society in the electoral process. The non-State actors project implemented by UNIPSIL, with the assistance of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, supports the efforts of key stakeholders, such as political parties, youth and women groups, tradition leaders and media, in promoting non-violence and political participation.

The successful conduct of elections will demonstrate the maturity of Sierra Leone's political leadership and institutions, as well as the consolidation of the democratic process in the country. Once the elections are concluded, the immediate focus should be on addressing any potential post-elections issues through dialogue and on ensuring a smooth transition of the elected Government. UNIPSIL stands ready to continue providing the necessary assistance in that respect, working with all stakeholders towards promoting national cohesion and reconciliation. However, consolidating and sustaining Sierra Leone's achievements would require continued progress in tackling the root causes, including those identified in the report of Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In that regard, with Sierra Leoneans taking the lead, the continued support of the international community, including the United Nations, will still be needed for some time to come. With that in mind, UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team will continue to assist the Government of Sierra Leone as long as it is deemed appropriate.

In concluding, I wish to take this opportunity to thank President Koroma and his Government for the continued cooperation and support for the work of the United Nations in Sierra Leone. I would also like to thank the Council for its sustained interest in Sierra Leone, as demonstrated in its recent mission to the country. Last but not least, I wish to acknowledge the very important role that the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission continues to play under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Gullerimo Rischynski in supporting peace consolidation efforts in the country, including the work of UNIPSIL.

The President: I thank Mr. Toyberg-Frandzen for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rishchynski.

Mr. Rishchynski (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to express the opinions of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and its States members. In response to the Security Council's letter of 6 September, I intend to focus my remarks on the path forward for Sierra Leone and the anticipated contribution of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

Sierra Leone faces an important moment in its history. The elections scheduled for November represent a crucial test and are widely viewed as a core benchmark for peace consolidation. The Peacebuilding Commission has monitored developments over the past year, including through regular contact with Freetown and by inviting the Chair of the National Electoral Commission to New York to brief on preparations. As Mr. Toyberg-Frandzen has just outlined in greater detail, the necessary logistical and financial arrangements are largely in place. There is good reason to expect technically sound and well-managed elections.

(*spoke in English*)

But the greatest challenge is political. All national stakeholders must fulfil their responsibility to create an environment conducive to successful elections. In each of the Commission's previous visits, interlocutors have raised concerns about persistent tensions between the major political parties, the role of unprofessional media willing to exacerbate political divides, and the risk that irresponsible actors will encourage young people to engage in politically-motivated violence. The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra

Leone (UNIPSIL) deserves great credit for addressing these challenges, particularly by following up on the 2009 joint communiqué, supporting non-State actors, and facilitating the Declaration agreed by political parties in May. These efforts have helped to establish a common understanding of the parameters of legitimate electoral competition, and it is now up to Sierra Leoneans to exercise their democratic rights and accept the resulting outcome.

With respect to the PBC, we intend to travel to Freetown in late October to take stock of the situation and engage with all relevant stakeholders, with a particular focus on the political parties, civil society and media. While there, we intend to stress the need to maintain open, inclusive dialogue and to abide by outstanding commitments made in the 2009 joint communiqué and the political Declaration of May 2012. We shall share the conclusions of that visit with the Security Council upon our return, including with respect to any areas requiring the attention of the international community.

While elections will remain the primary focus in the near future, Sierra Leone also stands poised to transition out of the immediate peacebuilding phase. This will involve a number of important processes. A successor to the Agenda for Change is under development by the Government, the United Nations presence is likely to change significantly, and Sierra Leone is piloting the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. Given this context, I would like to offer three general points that merit consideration during the post-elections period.

(*spoke in French*)

First, several of the outstanding peacebuilding challenges are long-term in nature. Addressing youth unemployment, fighting corruption and combating transnational crime will take sustained effort over a substantial period of time. Progress in these areas will also depend on developments outside Sierra Leone, both in terms of the global economy and with respect to the transnational threats plaguing West Africa. Even as Sierra Leone increasingly prioritizes socio-economic development, these issues must continue to be addressed. In that regard, it is promising that the Agenda for Prosperity will likely include pillars on employment, natural resources management and governance. It will also be especially important to ensure sustained support for those areas of UNIPSIL's current engagement that will require continuing attention in the context of a reconfigured United Nations presence in Sierra Leone.

(*spoke in English*)

Secondly, as the configuration's consideration of the second joint progress report on the Agenda for Change has demonstrated, Sierra Leone has developed a clear, coordinated and nationally owned approach. The United Nations has played a key role in helping to align international actors behind the single national strategy. It can and should continue to play that role, even as strategic priorities and institutional arrangements evolve.

Thirdly, transitions inevitably risk producing strategic and funding gaps. The Peacebuilding Commission could, and stands ready, to play a potentially useful role by helping to ensure overall coordination. Sustained multilateral and bilateral assistance will be especially important in the period before revenues from the extractive sector reinforce Sierra Leone's budget position. The configuration intends to engage more extensively with those issues in the coming months.

Let me conclude by noting that much has been invested and much gained in Sierra Leone in the past years. The forthcoming elections and transition period present risks, but also constitute an opportunity to further consolidate peace, deepen democratic governance and lay the foundations for a prosperous future. Sierra Leoneans have demonstrated tremendous determination in rebuilding their country after a devastating civil war. The international community needs to continue to standi shoulder to shoulder with them in the years to come.

The President: I thank Mr. Rishchynski for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Touray (Sierra Leone): While congratulating you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September and thanking you for giving my delegation an opportunity to contribute to today's briefing on the situation in Sierra Leone, I should like, on behalf of His Excellency President Ernest Bai Koroma, the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, to convey our profound appreciation for the continued support and unfailing interest of the Security Council, the wider membership of the United Nations and our international partners in consolidating our hard-won peace and security.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his ninth report (S/2012/679) on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), which covers the period 1 March to 31 August. The report meticulously highlights the progress made and the remaining challenges in our efforts at peace consolidation and transition to a more development-oriented phase. We note with profound appreciation the instructive review provodied courtesy of Executive Representative of the Secretary-General Jens Toyberg-Frandzen, which critically focused on the upcoming elections and issues of interest and concern in the post-election phase in Sierra Leone.

We also express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the members of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) through its Chair, Ambassador Guillermo Rishchynski of Canada, for the unremitting commitment and strong support they continue to demonstrate in the pursuit of peace and security in Sierra Leone. We note with particular interest Mr. Rishchynski's rundown on the preparations for the conduct of the elections on 17 November and the necessary support required of UNIPSIL and the agencies and programmes before and during the post-election transition, as well as his views on future support to Sierra Leone's political and economic priorities. We are quite in agreement with the facts set forth in his briefing.

The end of the conflict in 2002 marked the collective resolve of the people of Sierra Leone to bring an end to 11 years of nightmare, and their preference for peace, security and development. Since then, with the support of the Security Council, the United Nations in general and international partners, remarkable progress has been made in charting a path for a peaceful, secure, democratic Sierra Leone and its future prosperity. As we commend all of us and relevant stakeholders for the gains made, some of which are quite irreversible, it is crucial that together we continue to tackle the remaining challenges in order to further advance and consolidate comprehensively our peacebuilding priorities.

Key among them is the increasing need to address the economic, social and governance challenges to match the growing expectations of Sierra Leoneans. As already stated by the Chair of the configuration, several of those challenges are long-term in nature and will require sustained effort over a substantial period of time, since much depends on the global economic situation and the overall subregional security climate.

As we continue to make steady progress in addressing the three risks areas of youth unemployment, corruption and illicit drug trafficking and organized crime identified in our Agenda for Change and endorsed by the Sierra Leone PBC configuration, we are equally committed to making progress in strengthening our health care, energy, education, agriculture and transport infrastructure. Those areas, when fully developed, will catalyse prospects for job creation, address key peacebuilding priorities and put Sierra Leone on the path to sustainability and resilience. Fostering partnership with the international community to achieve the highly interlinked and desirable goals of peace, security and development remains a primary concern of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone.

The Government will continue to demonstrate strong political leadership in dealing with issues of political violence in whatever shape or form and irrespective of party affiliation, and, through due process, will continue to ensure that perpetrators of violence are brought to justice, as was evident in the conviction of those involved in the political violence in Freetown in Janurary. In that regard, the Government released a white paper on the report of the Shears-Moses Commission of Inquiry on the political violence of March 2009 and continues to make progress in addressing its recommendations, including working with all national stakeholders and international partners to establish an independent police complaints committee and strengthening the Independent Media Commission to improve its monitoring procedures over media matters and actors.

President Koroma continues to constantly engage all stakeholders, with a view to encouraging and promoting political dialogue towards the attainment of a collective commitment to peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible elections. In that regard, we call to the Council's attention the signing by all 10 registered political parties and other relevant stakeholders of the "Declaration on the 2012 elections", on 18 May — a code of conduct for the elections aimed at ensuring peaceful and violence-free elections. That is ample demonstration of the commitment of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone to peaceful, free, fair and credible elections with the hope that the results will be accepted by all.

We therefore continue to urge the Security Council and the United Nations in general, as well as our international partners, to maintain their full support for the ongoing electoral process. The presidential, parliamentary and local council elections scheduled for 17 November 2012, as has been noted, remain a crucial test for the consolidation of peace, security and democracy in Sierra Leone. Continued commitment and support from international partners to assist the Government in strengthening key national democratic institutions such as the Political Parties Registration Commission, the Independent Media Commission, the National Commission for Democracy, the National Electoral Commission, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone and the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, remains of primary significance.

I am confident in reporting to the Council that preparations for the presidential, parliamentary and local elections are on course and at an advanced stage, with the National Electoral Commission continuing to demonstrate transparency and credibility throughout the process. At the invitation of the Sierra Leone Configuration, the Chair of the National Electoral Commission gave a comprehensive briefing to members of the Configuration in New York in June on the preparations for the elections.

Recent activities aimed at improving the electoral climate have included the presidential assent by His Excellency Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma to the Public Elections Law, which consolidates all existing electoral legislation into a single document; the appointment of a new Chair of the Political Parties Registration Commission after the death of the incumbent, in order to enhance the Commission's capacity to be actively functional in the discharge of its mandate; and the inauguration of the electoral courts to deal with electoral offences and related matters in order to ensure due process, as well as support for the machinery of justice through UNIPSIL's collaboration with Government in the training of judges, prosecutors, police investigators and paralegal staff. To provide equal access to air time and programmes of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, an elections guideline prepared by the Corporation was adopted by all political parties on 9 August and followed by the establishment of an elections unit to focus specifically on elections matters.

In line with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict in Sierra Leone, the Government is continuing to collaborate with all national stakeholders and the United Nations in promoting the drafting and enactment of the gender equality bill, so as to enhance women's participation in the decision-making process. The Government is also continuing to strengthen its efforts to make progress towards the education of the girl child and the provision of free health care to pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under 5 years of age. Furthermore, with support from the Peacebuilding Fund and the International Organization for Migration, the National Commission for Social Action commenced a new round of payments of reparations to the remaining victims of the 11-year conflict.

The Agenda for Change and the United Nations Joint Vision aligned with it continue to provide a strong partnership link between Sierra Leone and the United Nations, as well as the donor community. Its implementation has so far had a great impact on peacebuilding. Sierra Leone today is considered a best practice in donor coordination as well as a peacebuilding success story. In that regard, we stress the need for the international community to continue to invest in success, in the spirit of the New Deal arrived at in Busan on aid effectiveness, and to recognize the need for special attention to be paid to countries emerging from conflict — Sierra Leone being one of the pilot countries. The preparation of the successor development framework to the Agenda for Change, anchored in the New Deal and entitled Agenda for Prosperity, is well under way, and some of its key elements will be highlighted during the presentation of the second joint progress report on the Agenda for Change at the Sierra Leone Configuration meeting to be held soon.

The Chair of the Sierra Leone Configuration, Ambassador Guillermo Rishchynski, visited Sierra Leone in January. His report and the briefing by the Configuration underscored the progress made in addressing key peacebuilding priorities and the need for enduring support, particularly in the area of youth unemployment and empowerment, building the capacity of the police, and the need for strong private-sector growth, which could translate into more tangible peace dividends and sustainable peace consolidation. At an open briefing by the Security Council team after its visit to Sierra Leone in May, similar sentiments were also expressed on the progress made and the need for support to address the present challenges.

We commend the support of the United Nations and international partners for the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and hail the judgement passed against Mr. Charles Taylor by the Court for crimes against humanity and violations of international humanitarian law committed in Sierra Leone during the course of the conflict. We therefore urge the United Nations and international partners to continue to support the Court towards the completion of its work.

Let me conclude by welcoming the new Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jens Toyberg-Frandzen, and assuring him of the Government's interest and of its readiness and willingness to cooperate with him in order to ensure a successful outcome of his mission in Sierra Leone. I am sure that by now he must be convinced that Sierra Leoneans are very friendly, hospitable and ordinarily peaceful. We also express thanks and appreciation to the staff of UNIPSIL, United Nations agencies and programmes in Sierra Leone, and all our international partners for their unreserved commitment to achieving Sierra Leone's peacebuilding objectives along with our development transformation goals.

As in the previous general elections held in 2002 and 2007, we look forward once again to peaceful, free, fair and credible elections acceptable to all.

Before closing, I should like to make some comments on the issue of nomination fees, as raised in the briefing by the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General. I should like to put on record the fact that first, the decision was taken by an independent body — the National Electoral Commission — and that secondly, due process was ensured, as it was discussed and debated in Parliament, and the ayes had it. Thirdly, it should perhaps be brought to the attention of the Council that it is a known factor that some of the political parties had to levy nearly 50 million leones for an aspirant to be a presidential candidate for the next elections — that is asking for hundreds of millions for the national presidential elections for each candidate.

Furthermore, it is a known factor that some other parties have tried to introduce mechanisms aimed at more or less spreading out the burden of that fee by ensuring that they get it out of the fees contributed to the parties by aspirants, out of which proceeds they will bond the nomination fee for the successful aspirant who becomes the candidate. So mechanisms are to be put in place by the parties themselves to make sure that the burden is spread out and that no one member bears it alone.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on this subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.